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## Regulations on the awarding of grants for research equipment (R'Equip Regulations)

14 February 2017

The National Research Council

based on Article 48<sup>1</sup> of the Funding Regulations of 27 February 2015

issues the following Regulations:

### **Article 1 Principles**

<sup>1</sup> The Swiss National Science Foundation (hereinafter "the SNSF") awards grants to researchers to cover the acquisition costs of research equipment (hereinafter "R'Equip Grants") with a view to facilitating research projects at the high end of international research. The research supported by the research equipment must be of high scientific quality, but it need not necessarily be funded by the SNSF.

<sup>2</sup> No R'Equip grants are awarded for research equipment, which is usually considered part of the basic infrastructure of an institute or laboratory.

<sup>3</sup> No R'Equip grants are awarded for investing in replacements of existing equipment, unless the replacement has new functionalities that enable a breakthrough in research.

### **Article 2 Grants, eligible costs**

<sup>1</sup> A R'Equip grant generally covers up to 50% of the acquisition costs and amounts to a maximum of CHF 1,000,000. Additional funding from other sources must therefore be obtained.

<sup>2</sup> Eligible costs comprise acquisition costs, i.e. all expenses linked to the purchase, production, adjustment, and installation of the equipment. The costs of call procedures or other expenses leading up to the decision to acquire the equipment are not regarded as eligible costs.

<sup>3</sup> The acquisition costs of the research equipment to be covered by a R'Equip grant must amount to at least CHF 100,000.

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<sup>1</sup> [Funding Regulations of the SNSF](#)

### **Article 3            Applicants and application submission requirements**

<sup>1</sup> Researchers who work at the proposed location of the research equipment and will assume part of the responsibility for its use and maintenance are eligible to submit an application.

<sup>2</sup> Applicants must meet the requirements set out in Article 10 of the Funding Regulations and, at the same time, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

- a. Applicants must have obtained their doctoral degree at least four years before the submission date of the application. Applicants without a doctorate must generally have completed three years of research work as their main source of income since obtaining their higher education degree. Researchers who attain an independent research position within four years of obtaining their doctoral degree may submit R'Equip applications as soon as they are appointed to the said position.
- b. Applicants must be capable of carrying out research projects independently, and of leading the project employees in terms of both scientific and line management.

<sup>3</sup> R'Equip applications may be submitted by one or more applicants. In a joint application, one applicant must be designated to represent all applicants vis-à-vis the SNSF (corresponding applicant), which representation shall be legally binding. The provisions set out in Article 12 of the Funding Regulations apply.

<sup>4</sup> Project partners pursuant to Article 11 paragraph 2 of the Funding Regulations are permissible in R'Equip applications, provided they contribute to the acquisition, installation, or maintenance of the research equipment by collaborating with the applicants, but are not responsible for the research projects that will be facilitated by the research equipment.

### **Article 4            Submission deadline and applications**

<sup>1</sup> The SNSF sets the annual deadline for the submission of applications for R'Equip grants and announces it at least three months in advance.

<sup>2</sup> Researchers must only submit one R'Equip application per submission deadline.

<sup>3</sup> The applications must be submitted electronically in accordance with the requirements specified by the SNSF and must contain all the necessary information and documents; the following documents, in particular, must be submitted:

- a. a letter from the highest governing body of the research institution at the proposed location confirming that the research equipment conforms with the strategic orientation of the organisational unit to which it will be allocated and that the maintenance and operation of the acquisition is guaranteed;
- b. a list of other user groups besides the applicants that may benefit from the requested research equipment; and
- c. an overview of the estimated acquisition costs based on the quotations obtained by the applicants.

<sup>4</sup> In addition, the application must specify the composition of the future group of users, who should preferably come from two or more research institutions, the estimated degree of utilisation, and the research projects that will be facilitated by the research equipment.

### **Article 5            Evaluation criteria**

<sup>1</sup> Proposals that meet the formal requirements are forwarded for scientific evaluation.

<sup>2</sup> The following evaluation criteria are applied:

- a. scientific quality of the project to be conducted using the research equipment: scientific relevance, topicality, originality and feasibility;
- b. the quality of the requested research equipment: its originality and innovation potential, its added value compared to the equipment already available, as well as its suitability for carrying out the relevant project;
- c. the number of research groups that will benefit from the research equipment and the scientific qualifications of the researchers participating in these groups, i.e. their scientific track record and expertise in relation to the research equipment and the research work to be conducted using the equipment.

#### **Article 6 Evaluation and decision**

<sup>1</sup> The National Research Council may request the help of international experts during the evaluation procedure.

<sup>2</sup> It decides whether an application is approved or rejected. The SNSF informs the corresponding applicant about the approval or rejection of their application by means of a written ruling.

#### **Article 7 Transfer of the grant; acquisition and operational start**

<sup>1</sup> The R'Equip grant awarded by the SNSF may be transferred as soon as the grantee submits to the SNSF the binding decision to acquire the research equipment and a detailed overview of the related definitive acquisition costs, as well as an official confirmation that the equipment is financially fully covered.

<sup>2</sup> The transfer of funds and the start of the grant has to be requested within a year of the date on which the ruling was issued. Once started, the duration of a R'Equip grant is generally one year. Only in response to a well substantiated request, the grant duration can be extended.

<sup>3</sup> Other than that, Article 33 of the Funding Regulations applies.

#### **Article 7a Research equipment modified after approval of the grant<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> The grantee undertakes to acquire the approved equipment in accordance with the grant ruling. If justified by the circumstances, the grantee may in the request for release of funds, but at the very latest before purchase, apply for acquisition of equipment that deviates from the specifications of the equipment requested in the original application.

<sup>2</sup> The SNSF may approve and confirm by email research equipment modified after issuance of the grant ruling, particularly if an optimised model has become available in the meantime.

<sup>3</sup> The grantee must be able to show that

- a. the modified research equipment is at least of the same quality as the approved equipment;
- b. the goals as well as the evaluated and approved basis for the research and for using the equipment remain unchanged;
- c. the guarantees and co-financing by the institution remain unchanged for the modified equipment; and

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<sup>2</sup> Inserted pursuant to the Research Council's decision of 6 May 2020, in force with immediate effect.

d. the modified equipment can be acquired with the R'Equip grant without incurring any additional costs for the SNSF and with any savings from the acquisition being deducted from the SNSF grant.

<sup>4</sup> The grantee may not acquire research equipment that represents a modified version of the equipment approved in the grant ruling without prior permission from the SNSF. If this provision is breached, the SNSF may block payment of the grant or demand the repayment of funds that were already transferred to the grantee. Article 43 of the Funding Regulations remains reserved.

## **Article 8        Reports**

<sup>1</sup> After the definitive operational start of the research equipment, the grantee shall submit the following reports to the SNSF:

- a. a detailed statement of the acquisition costs and
- b. a report on the use and successful operation of the equipment.

<sup>2</sup> The reports must generally be submitted no later than one year after the transfer of the grant.

## **Article 9        Right of use and right of disposal**

<sup>1</sup> The research equipment acquired under the R'Equip Grant belongs to the research institution where the said equipment is located. Subject to the following provisions, the said research institution has the right of use and the right of disposal.

<sup>2</sup> The research equipment must be used for the purpose outlined in the application.

<sup>3</sup> Research groups from other Swiss research institutions must not be excluded from using the research equipment. However, the use outlined in the application will take precedence. If fees are charged for using the research equipment, they must be based on the actual operating costs and must not contain a share of any amortisation in respect of the R'Equip grant awarded by the SNSF.

<sup>4</sup> The SNSF must be informed in writing about any change of location, or change of purpose, or any sale of the research equipment within five years after payment of the R'Equip Grant. In all other respects, Article 45 of the Funding Regulations applies.

## **Article 10       Further provisions**

Subject to any specific provisions in these Regulations, the provisions of the Funding Regulations and the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations apply.

## **Article 11       Entry into force**

These Regulations enter into force on 14 February 2017.